

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO USLO PEKING

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3231

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 3419

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EMAE, SN, CH

SUBJ: BETHLEHEM SINGAPORE INTEREST IN BUILDING OIL RIGS FOR
PRC

1. SUMMARY. BETHLEHEM SINGAPORE OFFICIALS CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
AUGUST 5 SEEKING ADVICE ON HOW BETHLEHEM SHOULD APPROACH
PRC FOR PURPOSE OF SELLING OIL RIGS. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE
USLO ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. TEAM OF CHINESE OFFICIALS FROM CHINA NATIONAL MACHINERY
IMPORTS/EXPORTS CORPORATION LED BY TSUI HUAN MIN BRIEFLY VISITED
BETHLEHEM SINGAPORE YARDS (70 PERCENT US-OWNED, 30 PERCENT
SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT-OWNED) IN MAY. PRC TEAM APPEARED EXTREMELY
KNOWLEDGEABLE AND VERY INTERESTED IN BETHLEHEM FACILITY.
BETHLEHEM OFFICIALS ARE EAGER TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS MEETING AND
CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AUGUST 5 SEEKING ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO
APPROACH PRC.

3. BETHLEHEM SINGAPORE OFFICIALS ARE HOPEFUL THAT SUBSTANTIAL
PRC OIL RIG ORDER CAN BE ATTAINED BY RIGHT APPROACH. THEY
POINTED OUT THAT TWO RIGS FOR PRC ALREADY UNDER CONSTRUCTION
BY ROBIN SHIPYARD CO. IN SINGAPORE, A FIRM FAR LESS QUALIFIED
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THAN BETHLEHEM. FURTHERMORE, THEY SAID THAT THERE IS MUCH TALK

IN SINGAPORE SHIPYARD CIRCLES THAT PRC HAS RECENTLY PLACED ORDER IN SINGAPORE FOR THREE ADDITIONAL RIGS (A JACK-UP, A DRILLING SHIP, AND A SWAMP BARGE FOR SHALLOW WATER DRILLING).

4. BETHLEHEM FEELS THAT PRC MUST SOON GO FORWARD WITH A SUBSTANTIAL OFFSHORE DRILLING PROGRAM, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN TO ESTABLISH ITS CLAIM TO CERTAIN POTENTIAL OFFSHORE OIL PRODUCING AREAS NOW IN DISPUTE.

5. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE USLO ASSISTANCE IN DETERMINING MOST APPROPRIATE PRC FOREIGN TRADE CORPORATION FOR BETHLEHEM TO APPROACH (E.G. CHINA NATIONAL MACHINERY IMPORT/EXPORT CORPORATION, CHINA NATIONAL TECHNICAL IMPORT/EXPORT CORPORATION, ETC.). WE HAVE TOLD BETHLEHEM THEY SHOULD WRITE THIS CORPORATION DIRECTLY, WITH INFO COPY TO USLO FOR ANY HELP IT MIGHT PROVIDE. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON HOW BETHLEHEM OR MARATHON LETOURNEAU, THE OTHER MAJOR US RIG BUILDING COMPANY IN SINGAPORE, MIGHT BEST ENTER THIS POTENTIALLY LUCRATIVE MARKET. HOLDRIDGE

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